so far in 1995-96 (April-Sept., 95) are as under:—

(Qty. in MTs)
(Value in Rs. crore:)

| Item | 1994-95 | | 1995-96 (April-Sept. ,95) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Qty | Value | Qty. | Value |
| 1. Rice | 891423 | 1181.21 | 1983676 | 1575.70 |
| 2. Wheat | 58206 | 30.85 | 38125 | 19.45 |
| 3. Pulses | 59497 | 90.36 | 35002 | 49.83 |
| 4. Coarse Careals | 68595 | 25.67 | 10267 | 6.78 |
| TOTAL: | 1077721 | 1328.09 | 2067070 | 1651.76 |

(Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(d) and (e) Exports of wheat & rice during the period April-Sept., 1995 have been 20.22 lakh MTs as compared with 2.94 lakh MTs during the same period last year. The menifold quantitative increase has strained the infrastructure. Delays have occurred at cartain times due to: congestion at Kandla port and transportation problems. These have been resolved by recourse to directing to other ports on the west and east coasts including minor ports such as Kakinada and resorting to road movement to supplement* the rail rake capacity. Constant attention is being paid to resolving problems faced by exporters to ensure timely export of wheat & rice from the country.

**Association of tea producing countries**

2092. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that six tea producing nations including India and Sri Lanka commenced the two day conference in April 1995 to consider forming an association promote the industry jointly which is facing problems with declining tea prices in the world market;

(b) if so, the details of participating countries;

(c) whether the conference has adopted Constitution for the proposed association; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the conference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) A proposal for formation of an Association of Tea Producing Countries has been mooted as a result of the initiative taken by Sri Lanka. The Association has been proposed to be formed basically with a view to establish a mechanism for meaningful interaction amongst tea producing member countries on the production, productivity and research.

Preparatory meeting for the formation of the proposed Association was held in Colombo on 27th and 28th April, 1995, and was attended by 'delegates from

Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malawi and Sri Lanka.

During the aforesaid meeting a draft constitution of the proposed Association, its structure, funding and location of the Secretariat etc. were discussed in detail and it was agreed that the participating countries would forward their observations on the draft documents circulated by the Sri Lankan authorities to the Tea Board of Sri Lanka.

Apart from the discussions on the draft document of the constitution of Association other issues discussed during the meeting were as follows:—

(a) Review of situation arising out of decline in tea prices.

(b) Generic promotion of tea in the overseas markets.

(c) Possible areas of technical cooperation amongst tea producing countries.

(d) Threat to natural tea from artificial substitute products.

(c) Inter-Governmental cooperation in tea research.

**Conditions of female agricultural workers**

2093. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the female agricultural workers in the country are the most exploited lot without equal remuneration and working conditions and without medical and maternity facilities; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to improve the lot of female agricultural workers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) In order to secure reasonable working conditions for women workers and to prevent their exploitation, several laws have been enacted by the Parliament. The protective legal provisions under different laws include provision of creche for the benefit of women workers, time off for feeding children during working hours, separate toilets and washing facilities near workplace, provision of maternity leave etc. In order to prevent economic exploitation of women workers, the Government has also enacted the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which provides for non-discrimination in the matters relating to payment of wage and other service conditions. Under the Act, the officers notified as Inspectors make inspections and prosecute those found violating the provisions of the Act. The Central Government monitors the implementation of the Act.

**Meeting of central provident fund trust**

2094. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) how many times the Central Provident Fund Trust met during the last three years;

(b) the details of each meeting;

(c) what decisions were taken on the agenda;

(d) how many times did the trust meet outside Delhi to review the functioning of the trust;

(e) how many regional offices and subordinates offices were visited by Members of the trust and also the shortcomings found in the functioning of each office; and

(f) how many complaints have been received by the head-quarters, year-wise details during the last three years and action taken and how many complaints arc pending for final disposal?